

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	3193 Porter Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	February 23, 2012	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	12-144	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett		New Construction

Working with Blupath architects, owners Helen Wechsler and David Shapinsky seek concept review to add a rear third story atop an existing two-story ell and make other modifications to their Cleveland Park home. The house is half of a Tudor Revival duplex constructed in 1928 of brick and stone with false timbering and stucco on the second floor. It is one of a row of Tudor Revival duplexes on this stretch of Porter Street. Although not all built by the same architect/builder teams, these Tudor Revivals exhibit a consistency of form and details demonstrative of their style.

Project Description

The proposed work entails converting the attic into living space by extending the third floor of the house over the existing second floor rear wing, adding windows in the front and side gables of the third floor, and adding a skylight in the side roof. The rear addition would feature an enclosed portion and a semi-open porch. Other work includes converting a side door to a pair of casement windows, and replacing all windows.

The design of the rear addition is modern in its form and materials. The roof and canted side wall will be partially clad in translucent polycarbonate panels and the rear wall is open, but screened. The addition is proposed to project over the side and rear walls of the underlying ell.

Evaluation

Addition: Generally the Board looks to see that additions to historic homes are deferent to the original structure in scale, location, and design – usually through careful massing, a lower height and an inset from the side wall to clearly differentiate old from new and to expose the original rear corner, and a compatibility of fenestration and materials. In the proposed construction, the added floor would project out further than the side wall of the main block of the house and cantilever over the side and rear of the ell.

Previous Board approvals for this type of addition have typically been predicated on the new construction being set in from the side, giving less opportunity for visibility and allowing the original massing to remain prominent. Setting in the addition here would result in the loss of a few feet of space. However, because the addition is set in on the opposite side (facing the neighbor), it is possible that some square footage could be recaptured by erecting the third floor flush with the wall below. The use of roof shingles and polycarbonate panels for the side wall is not incompatible for a rear addition, particularly if it is inset to further obscure its visibility from the street.

Adding windows: The HPO has carefully considered the proposal for adding new window openings in the front and side gables. In this instance, the addition of small casement windows would seem to be compatible with the house and neighborhood. In this row of Tudor Revivals, virtually all have a front-facing attic window or vent. In general a Tudor Revival house with a

steeply pitched roof and false timbering would feature the type of window proposed here. Were this property in a row of identical houses where no attic windows were present, the change would be difficult to find compatible. However, given the style of the building and the presence of similar windows in original neighboring construction, and the appropriateness of this window type in Tudor Revival architecture, the alteration can be determined compatible with the house and the historic district. While rare, the Board has approved new windows in front elevations, such as at 3602 Newark Street, where the change was determined appropriate to the style and character of the house.

Skylight: The Board has consistently discouraged visible skylights in historic districts. While the proposed skylight on the side roof is not highly prominent, it should be pushed off from the visible portion of the roof and placed on the flat portion to create an invisible and compatible alteration.

Side door and windows: The conversion of the side door into a pair of casement windows does not affect the overall composition or character of this elevation, provided the existing width is maintained. Per the Board's guidelines, replacing original windows is discouraged without documentation of significant deterioration. Prior to considering replacement, the applicants should fully evaluate repair options. If replacement is ultimately sought, documentation should be provided that supports the extent of deterioration.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the following to be compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the preservation act:

1. The proposed addition, with the provision that it be inset from the side wall of the original block of the house;
2. The addition of windows on the front and side gables and conversion of the side door into windows of the same width;
3. A new skylight, if it is relocated to a non-visible portion of the roof;
4. Replacement of the windows only once repair has been evaluated and if it can be documented that the existing windows are sufficiently deteriorated to warrant replacement.

The HPO further requests delegation of final.